

# INVITATIONS TO CREATE

## 30 DAYS OF EASY ART PROMPTS

By Megan Schiller



## Imagine your child walking into a room to discover a few art materials thoughtfully arranged on the table.

This curious display is fresh and intriguing, inviting him to sit down and engage. This is an "invitation to create," sometimes called a prompt, or provocation. Invitations are a great way to deepen your child's art experience and encourage new ways of using familiar materials.

Setting up an invitation to create is easy. It should be done while your child is out of the room so that she can discover it on her own. I like to set up invitations while my kids are asleep so they can work on them in the morning. Another great time to set up an invitation is while your child is at school. It can be a calming afternoon activity, perfect for a little down time.

### IT'S THIS EASY

Take a few minutes to arrange some materials on your creative surface (art table, kitchen table, tray, etc.). The materials can range from simple to complex and can be familiar or completely new items. Display them in an interesting way that looks purposeful and inviting. Only use a few different materials each time. Presenting the materials in an interesting way will spark your child's curiosity and beckon him to play.

Imagine how special your child will feel to have a thoughtfully prepared surprise waiting for him each day!

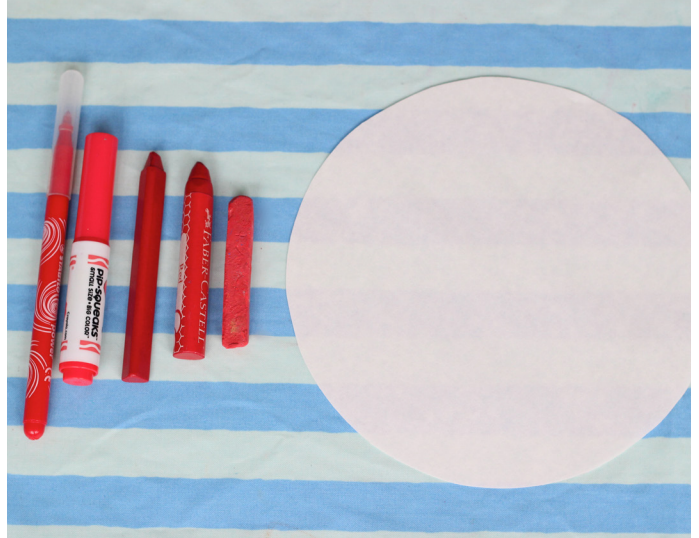


# 10 TIPS ON SETTING UP AN INVITATION TO CREATE

- 1.** For the first invitation, put out something that is familiar to your child, but add a new twist. The key for the first day is that your child is confident with the materials, but pushed to explore them in a new way.
- 2.** If your child doesn't notice this set up, you can casually mention that there is something interesting on the table. If your child often resists your suggestions, it is best to let her discover this prompt on her own.
- 3.** Be consistent. Try to put out something (even if it's only two items), every day until you notice a change. Challenge yourself to do this for a week and see what happens. How does it affect your child's relationship to the materials?
- 4.** Rotate between simple invitations (tape and cardboard) and more complex/involved invitations (various shades of one paint color and paper), depending on your energy and time.
- 5.** With each new invitation, you can get more creative in your selection. Your child will catch on and look forward to the challenge.
- 6.** Try not to have an outcome in mind. Let your child use the materials in his own way (as long as he follows your house rules). If you want to help your child expand his thinking, you can ask questions that might provoke new ways of using the materials.
- 7.** An invitation isn't a challenge to only use those specific materials (though if your child wants to make it a challenge, that's awesome!). So don't be discouraged if she decides to add different materials to the mix. The goal is to engage and inspire!
- 8.** An invitation can be something your child can do alone, with siblings, or with friends. Or it can be something you and your child do together, bouncing ideas off each other, exploring the materials together with wonder.
- 9.** Trays are your friend! Use a large plastic tray or cookie sheet when painting, gluing, or using play dough to make cleanup easier. Trays are also great if you want to set up the project ahead of time, but don't want to leave it on the table. Just move the tray and plop it on the table when you're ready.
- 10.** Remember, have it set up in advance, so your child can stumble upon the intriguing arrangement of materials!

## DAY 1

- + Piece of paper cut into a circle shape (trace the rim of a large bowl, then cut out)
- + Different drawing tools (markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.) in only warm colors (reds, yellows, pinks, warm browns)



## DAY 2

- + Play dough (roll a few pieces into small balls and leave a larger piece as well)
- + Toothpicks
- + Beads and/or buttons (for an edible version use grapes, marshmallows, or gumdrops, with toothpicks and Cheerios)



## DAY 3

- + Aluminum foil (tape corners to table, tray, or cardboard)
- + A few colors of tempera paint (poster paint) on a paint tray or plate
- + Paintbrush
- + Cotton swabs (Q-tips)

